

Reviewing & Planning



SRFC Lands and Leasing

Here you see a satellite view of the general area surrounding SRFC Clubhouse down to the roundabout on the western side of the town. The area you see to the right bounded in 'yellow' represents lands SRFC have just recently leased from Cork County Council – the terms being 35years at €200—per year. Those of you familiar with the grounds will be well aware hat we have had the use of these lands since we first 'moved in' back in the early 1980's, however, technically we might be considered 'squatters, as we didn't officially have a lease in place from the start - an oversight. That said we were always a very "law-abiding" group of people and didn't ever raise the 'ire' of the Council by doing anything out of the way, other than play the game of rugby– and so everything ran smoothly.

When in 2006, we decided to renovate the old Clubhouse and apply for Sports funding, we had to do some research to establish if in fact we were eligible to apply for a SportsGrant – because it is written in stone, that any development – for which a Sports grant is sought - must be on land owned or leased (and a long Lease) by the applicant. Well, we eventually got over that hump when we confirmed we did own enough land - outlined in red above - to cover the proposed development at the time, so everything went ahead as planned - we secured the Grant, and the renovated Clubhouse was finally completed in 2007 - resulting in the much admired building we have today.

Fast forward to 2019, and it became clear that such was the increase in new members – especially at Underage level – boys and girls, that we needed additional dressing rooms facilities, so with a plan in mind, it was decided to put pen to paper and seek funding for the new development. As luck would have it, this development was also on land we owned, so no problem this time on that front. While the funding received was very welcome there was still a substantial amount to be raised, but with everyone – well a good amount – giving a little, and others a little more, we did manage to raise the balance of approximately €50K to finish that project too., and it blends in very well with the original structure - almost as if it grew there - as someone remarked.

Now, it's not that we were blessed with foresight in reaching a decision about where the dressing rooms and showers would go, because it more or less picked its own spot. While the chief concern was to provide the best changing facilities possible for the underage on those cold wintery days, when that requirement was achieved we noticed that we could incorporate a very sizable balcony area on the roof of the development – and incorporate it rather easily to link with the Bar and Function room on the first floor. So, it was like a bonus development – a 2 for the price of 1 project. The additional costing for galvanised railing and safety requirements to comply with regulations was well worth the spend, and now there is now a spectacular viewing area to sit and relax with friends and enjoy a drink and a chat, or watch whatever match being played on the pitch below. It is envisaged that we could start a Tag Rugby League in the Summer time too, which in itself is a great social and sporting event enjoyed by all – so the potential for the use of the balcony area to compliment the Bar and Lounge facilities, is great indeed – now if we could only say goodbye to Covid-19 -, we could breathe easily again, and a hopeful return to some kind of normality.

And so, we are in March 2021, and the wind of change is forever blowing, as they say. One project that has been put on the long finger for some time has slowly worked its way back into contention and that is Match Lighting – or indeed some kind of suitable lighting for teams to train under. Our present system is there for a long time, and apart from being old, is inefficient and expensive to maintain. Vast areas of the pitch are left unusable with the lights on – for obvious reasons, and the one thing agreed by all is the need for an upgrade of some significance.

Management has teased this lighting problem out for years and have taken onboard the observations of Coaches and players and Committee members generally, on the best way forward, and the consensus for change was overwhelming, and was more a question of when rather than if. Now with so much down time this past year because of

of their lighting project, and so the reality of having such lighting means that League matches can be held under lights on any mutually agreeable evening – which is exactly what the MunsterBranch are encouraging. It also means players may not be tied down Sunday after Sunday and lose out on valuable family time. Even before Covid, quite a few Clubs were able to host fixtures on Friday evenings – not unlike many Senior and provincial fixtures, as we've come to accept.

So match quality lighting is certainly a step in the right direction and with a bit of luck in securing a decent Sports Grant, I have little doubt we will eventually achieve our target.

Now, the area of land to the left, bounded in red, is a more recent acquisition and came about due to a basic lack of training facilities to cater for the many different groupings in the Club. The fact of the matter is that Club were effectively starved of playing/training areas, and the main training pitch by the Clubhouse was overused and really needed time to recover. Our numbers have increased dramatically in recent years especially in the Underage and Ladies section, and thankfully the Club were able to negotiate this additional land from the Council a few years ago. Now, it was in a pretty raw state initially but some well known faces came on board with their tractors and rotovators and God knows what else, and turned the playing area into a very usable pitch – and now takes some of the pressure off the Clubhouse pitch as I call it. We organised a short term lease to get ourselves over the initial stage, and its up for a longer term renewal shortly. The Club have so far invested approximately €12, 000 in developing the site and making it as safe and as comfortable as possible, and thus far it has proven to be a valuable addition to our playing facilities generally.

The land in question is of course a 'flood plain' and as such may be subject to 'accepting' the overflow from the neighbouring Ilen River – that is all very much accepted by the Club – that was very much understood and common knowledge at the time, but the number of flooding incidences have been generally small, and the land very quickly returns to normal very quickly, and apart from the removal of flooding 'debris' from time to time, there has been no long term damage. It's really great to have the additional training grounds and we would not be able to manage without it.